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From the Office of the Director of Health

Community Feedback Vital to Health Planning

The recently released "State of the Community's Health 2004" highlighted issues, challenges and statistics as phase one of a comprehensive community health planning effort. Phase two kicks off Monday evening with an opportunity for the public to comment on the report and share personal perspectives on the state of our community's health.

The public is invited to attend the free community forum Monday, November 8th at St. John's Hammons Heart Institute (1235 E. Cherokee). The forum begins at 7:00 pm with a brief overview of the assessment followed by an opportunity for attendees to speak with program representatives in small group settings.

Featured topics will include minority health, youth issues, senior issues, chronic and communicable diseases and maternal and child health. Surveys will also be distributed, encouraging individuals to prioritize a number of issues tracked in the assessment, based on their perception of the issues' impact on our community.

Administrator of Community Health and Epidemiology Clay Goddard says all comments will be taken into consideration in the strategic planning process. He adds, "Receiving community feedback is critical to any effort to improve the community's health."

Public comments can also be posted on the health department's website by visiting www.springfieldmogov.org/health and clicking on the 2004 Community Health Assessment link.

Similar forums were held in 1996, following the release of the first "State of the Community's Health" report. Feedback from the community resulted in the emergence of ten focus areas. The crowning achievement of the strategic planning efforts that followed was the successful implementation of the Jordan Valley Health Center.

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